
الخشوع

Khushoo

By:

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We would like to express our sincere appreciation to those who contributed to the publication of this book. May Allah reward them for their efforts.

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Introduction

All Praise is for Allah Alone and Salutations are for His Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ), his companions and his family and all those who follow them with Ehsaan.

To proceed:

Salaah (Prayer) as is defined by the Scholars of Islam is an act of worship consisting of specific sayings accompanying specific actions, at specific times. It begins with "Takbeer" and ends with "Tasleem".

This sacred and noble act of Salaah maybe divided into separate but interrelated components.

First: The body or the external aspects of the Salaah (Prayer). This comprises of its mechanical components and includes purification, standing, bowing, prostrating, sitting, recitation of the Quran and all the other apparent aspects. All these aspects must be performed correctly before anyone's Salaah can be said to be Sahih (correct). This aspect is dealt with in all its details in the books of Fiqh.

Undoubtedly, those who translate and write about Islam in English have excellent works that would assist Muslims in understanding performance of the external aspect of the Salaah (i.e. the body of the Salaah). However, very little time is spent on emphasizing the importance of consciousness of Allah in the Salaah. Consequently, what we find is that most of the translated and written works deal with the rules governing

the various components of the external aspects of Salaah. Due to this lack of emphasis on Al-Khushoo’ by the various authors its significance has therefore, been also de-emphasized by the average worshipper.

The importance of the external aspects of the Prayer cannot be de-emphasized and we must warn our brothers and sisters that if they are negligent in learning the outward manifestations of the Salaah that this can lead to destruction. All aspects of the Prayer must be well understood so that they can pray as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did.

He (ﷺ) commanded:

“Pray as you see me pray.” [Al-Bukhari]

This command directly relates to the outward aspects of the Salaah. Hence all Muslims must make every effort to know how the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed, so that we can obey this command of his.

However, this work is not related to the external aspects, so much time would not be spent here dealing with the Fiqh (rules governing the performance) of Salaah.

This short exhortation should suffice to create an interest in our brothers and sisters so that they would make much more effort to learn all aspects of Salaah properly.

Second: The spirit or the internal aspects of the Salaah which comprises of the following:

Purity of Niyyah (Intention)

Al-Khushoo' means being completely solemn, submissive and humble to Allah (ﷻ) during our performance of Prayer.

Muslims should at no time make their prayers ritualistic. However, the sad thing is that most of us have unconsciously fallen prey to this. The following narration will help us to understand this. Jubair bin Nufair narrates from `Aus ibn Maalik that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) looked towards the sky and said:

> **"It is now the time when knowledge shall be raised up."** So a man from the Ansaar called Ziyaad ibn Labeed said: **"O Messenger of Allah! Will knowledge be raised up, when it has been established and the hearts have stored it?"** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: **"I used to regard you as the best man of understanding among the people of Madinah; did the Jews and the Christians not have the Tauraat and the Injeel? So what benefit did this bring them?"** [An-Nasa`i, Ahmad, Al-Haakim, Ibn Hibbaan]

After reporting the Hadeeth, Jubair said, **I later met Shaddaad ibn `Aus, so he said: "`Aus has spoken truthfully. Shall I not inform you of the first part of the knowledge that will be taken up?" I said: "Of course." He said: Khushoo' (humility and consciousness) in prayer, until you will not see one attentive worshipper."**

It is when the external and the internal aspects of the Salaah are properly combined that it manifests itself through the per-

sonality of the one performing the Salaah as is stated by Allah, the All-Knowing:

> **"Verily, Salaah (Prayer) prevents from Al-Fahshaa (i.e. illegal sexual intercourse) and Al-Munkar (disbelief, polytheism or every kind of wicked and evil deed)." [Al-'Ankaboot 29:45]**

The above ayah clearly declares that the person who prays should not find within himself any of these two characteristics. This is so because when someone performs Salaah with consciousness and humility, then this Salaah works as a check for him, and in turn helps him to keep away from doing evil deeds.

The Need for Emphasizing Al-Khushoo’

As was mentioned above Khushoo’ means to be solemn, submissive and humble to Allah the Almighty, during the performance of the Salaah (Prayer). Khushoo’, which is the most important aspect of the Prayer, has to be present before it (the prayer) is fully accepted by Allah (﷾). He, the Al-Mighty said:

> **“Successful indeed are the believers: those who offer their prayers with Khushoo’ (solemnity and full submissiveness)…” [Al-Muminoon 23:1-2]**

Implied in this also is that one must be totally conscious of Allah (﷾) and let his/her heart be alive with His (﷾) remembrance during the performance of Salaah.

Therefore, if anyone finds that he is heedless whilst standing before Allah the Great during his prayer because his heart is directed to other things, naturally when he is not involved in it (i.e. Salaah) he would become more vulnerable to indulge in disobedience to Allah (﷾), because it is less likely for him to be aware of Allah then. If one performs his Fajr (Dawn) Salaah consciously and becomes involved in his daily affairs, he would be ashamed to do anything evil because he would be aware that he has an appointment to stand before his Lord again at noontime.

Compare this type of consciousness with another person who goes to his Fajr Salaah, but his heart is on everything but Allah (﷾). Another example is that of a Muslim who performs his Salaah because this is what he had been taught a Muslim must

do. Therefore, all it is to him is habit, and nothing more than a series of ritualistic standings, sittings, and bowings.

Obviously the effects of the Salaah on these categories of people described above will not be the same. Definitely the effects upon the person who is conscious of what he is doing during his Salaah and is aware that he is being monitored would be different from the one who is heedless and negligent or the one who performs it as a ritual.

Heedlessness of Allah (﷿) during the Salaah is the natural state of most of the praying Muslims living in our time. Their only struggle is centered on the fact that they must pray on time and that they must get the standing, sitting, bowing and other external aspects over with (i.e. for those who are that conscious). No time is spent to ensure that they correct the state of their hearts during the Salaah. What is important to them, it seems, is that they perform the mechanical aspects of the Salaah. Subsequently, when they find five minutes of spare time they quickly rush through their Salaah to get rid of 'the burden' on them.

It is important to realize that during Salaah, the heart is incapable of desiring both Allah and worldly possessions such as our children, money, etc. simultaneously, this is stated emphatically by Allah. He (﷿) said:

> **"Allah has not put for any man two hearts inside his body…" [Al-Ahzaab 33:4]**

Now, to what is our heart attached when we pray? Is it attached to Allah, or to the worldly things; if it is attached to the latter then clearly our loyalties are in the wrong place. This

shows that our love and the attachments of our hearts are directed to the world and whatever is in it. Whereas Allah commands us to love Him i.e. attach ourselves to Him, He (ﷻ) says:

> **"Say (O Muhammad): If your fathers, and your sons, and your brothers, and your spouses, and your tribe, and the wealth you have acquired, and the merchandise for which you fear there will be no sale, and the dwellings you desire, are more loved to you than Allah and His Messenger and Jihaad in His way, then wait until Allah brings His command (punishment) to pass…" [At-Taubah 9:24]**

Now let us compare ourselves to those people Allah (ﷻ) has commanded us to follow their pattern (i.e. the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions). Their attitude during the performance of their Salaah was completely different from the majority of us. Even while they were busy with their everyday chores outside the Masjid, their hearts were obsessed with returning to the Masjid to stand in communion with their Lord again. Can we imagine the state of their hearts during the performance of the Prayer?

They were conscious that they were always being monitored because they were living in the shade of the Revelation. Observing this attitude shows us to what extent their hearts were attached to Allah (ﷻ) and the Hereafter. What it emphasizes to us also how very far away we are in our attitude from those whom we are commanded to emulate.

The Importance of Khushoo’

When we analyze the statements of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) related to Salaah, we find that undoubtedly Al-Khushoo’ appears to be more important than the outward aspects of Salaah, because the value of the Prayer is directly related to the depth of fervency the servant of Allah can achieve during its performance.

Allah (ﷻ) commands us to be Humble in Salaah,

> **“Stand (in Prayer) to Allah in a devout frame of mind…” [Al-Baqarah 2:238]**

He (ﷻ) also commands us to be conscious in Salaah. He (ﷻ) said:

> **“Establish Salaah for My remembrance.” [Taha 20:14]**

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

> **“From among us is one who prays his Salaah completely and another who prays half, or a third, or a quarter” until he (ﷺ) reached a tenth. [An-Nasa`i]**

Subsequently, we can conclude from the above statement of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that what is recorded from anyone’s prayer is that part of it in which he was conscious of Allah, the Great.

Allah, Himself lauded those people who have achieved Al-Khushoo’ (solemnity, humility, and full submissiveness) when offering prayers.

He (ﷻ) says:

“Successful indeed are the believers: those who offer their prayers with Khushoo’ (solemnity and full submissiveness)” [Al-Mu’minoon 23:1-2]

Therefore, if anyone wants to be among those who are successful, then they have to try to achieve the noble characteristic of Al-Khushoo’ in their Salaah. After all, it is the Creator, Himself Who is informing us that this is one of the yardsticks to measure whether we are successful or not.

Bringing Home the Reality

When someone dies, what occurs? Everything but the soul is present in the body. This body still possesses the mouth, nose, heart, brain and all other mechanism it needs to function, yet it does not. Why? Obviously, because the soul is absent.

Does this body that is devoid of a soul have value? Certainly not. Proof of this is evident in the actions of those who love him the most while he was alive amongst them. When this soul departs, the one who loves him tries to get rid of him quickly. Is this not so?

If someone who is dearest to the dead person and loves him most when he was alive were to be asked to sleep with this body now that it has no soul, would he want to? They would not even think of it. All that occupies the minds of those near to him is what is the most effective way to get rid of it.

If, however, the soul returns, then so does its value return. This body with a soul now has value. As long as the soul is

present, even if the person had a severe accident and his face is so severely battered up that he can no longer be recognized. Even if he cannot hear, or see or speak anymore, or even if he is in a coma and in now considered a 'living vegetable', as long as his soul is there, then all efforts will be made to keep him alive. As we emphasized before, so long as the soul remains, then its value remains.

Likewise is the case with As-Salaah (the Prayer). The standing sitting, bowing, prostrating, etc. makes up the body of the Salaah, its soul/spirit is Al-Khushoo' (full solemnity coupled with submissiveness), and if it is absent in the Salaah, then so is its value. The Salaah without the Khushoo' would be now a set of empty rituals. Consider a very sick person who cannot stand up to pray, and so he offers his Salaah lying down but he is totally conscious of Allah (ﷻ), then his Salaah will contain a great value although the external aspects (the body of the prayer) were all absent. This is not the same if the position is reversed because as we pointed out before: If Al-Khushoo' (full solemnity coupled with full submissiveness) is absent in the Salaah, then so is its value.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

> **"…When you pray, do not look here and there because Allah directs His Face towards the face of His 'abd (worshipper) who is praying, as long as he does not turn away (or look away)" [At-Tirmidhi and Haakim]**

The Messenger (ﷺ) also said:

> **"Allah does not cease to turn to a slave in his prayer as long as he is not looking around; when he turns his face,**

Allah turns away from him." [Abu Dawood, Ibn Hibbaan, Ibn Khuzaimah]

What is the meaning of 'turning away (or looking away)'? For the person who is observing prayer it has two meanings:

1) The physical turning away (looking to the right or left or otherwise) during the prayer

2) Turning away from Allah (ﷻ) with the heart i.e. letting one's concentration be directed to other than the Almighty.

Both types of 'turning away' described above are Haraam in Islam (forbidden i.e. the person who is guilty of it is sinning).

The first of the two types of turning away (i.e. the physical turning away) we can try to control, and there is no doubt that this can be achieved with a fair amount of ease. However, the most serious problem for all of us is the turning away with our hearts and directing our concentration on other than Allah (ﷻ) during prayer.

Is this not the reality with most of us?

The following example should illustrate this for us very clearly:

Take the case of a brother who invited some brothers to his house for dinner after Maghrib (after sunset) prayer and forgot. However, just as he was about to pronounce the 'Takbeer' to start his Maghrib prayer, Satan came to him and whispered into his chest, reminding him of the invitation that would take place after the Prayer. Immediately he began to worry, and allowed his mind to dwell on this during the Prayer. However, Satan returned to him again and whispered 'Do not worry'

and presented him a list of things to do, prompting him to go to such and such store and such and such restaurant and to buy all the things he would need to honor his guests. Just when everything was carefully planned in his mind the Imaam pronounced the 'Tasleem' to indicate that the Salaah is completed.

Should such a person be rewarded for his Salaah as is one who performs his/her Salaah with Khushoo'? Obviously not. Therefore, do you expect Allah (ﷻ) to reward him for it?

Now ask yourself: Is your Salaah like this? If it is, then it means that the most important part of your Salaah - the Khushoo' is missing and you have to really start paying attention to it to correct this great deficiency.

Certainly no one desires that when he stands before Allah, the Just for judgment that he is informed that he had not performed any of his Salaah properly. Also, he should not expect any reward for something he did not do.

Our obligation and that of the brother used in this example would be to postpone all other thinking for the five or ten minutes that it would take for the Salaah to be completed. However, we have to realize that this is our biggest battle because our greatest enemy Satan is very envious of anyone who prostrates to Allah. As such he would try his utmost to ensure that he thwarts us from performing this noble act.

Necessary Steps to Develop Al-Khushoo'

The internal aspect of our Salaah can become closer to what is required if the following things are worked upon and effort is made to perfect them.

1. Complete consciousness or presence of mind during the performance of the Salaah (Prayer).

This means emptying the heart of everything except remembrance of Allah (ﷻ). This can only be achieved if one focuses his attention upon keeping the heart restricted. This will result in making the heart conscious and would restrict it to concentrating upon what its owner wants.

Many people are not aware that the condition of the heart is linked to what its owner aims after. This is determined based upon what he knows and does. His heart thereafter will not roam except upon these two things. Therefore, we can conclude that the heart would be consciousness in the Prayer if its owner is fully aware of his goal. Consequently, he should work diligently to know about it so that he can properly fulfill it.

Now, if this world and things related to it are of importance to a person and this is what all his attention is directed at fulfilling, then it is upon this that his heart will dwell. The heart of such a person would now find it very difficult to be conscious of Allah (ﷻ).

A person afflicted with such a severe ailment can only correct his deficient state if he makes Allah (ﷻ) and the seeking of His

(﷾) pleasures his goal. This must be his major concern so that his heart would follow accordingly.

Another thing that can greatly assist someone in clarifying his true purpose is a proper understanding of the life of this world in which he lives. He should contemplate what Allah (﷾) says about this materialistic state, because He (﷾) would know its reality better than everyone else. After all, is He not its Creator? After this he should further try to understand what Allah advises about the way in which he should go about his dealings, and what should be his relationship to the world in which he lives.

The statements of Allah (﷾) and His Messenger (ﷺ) bring home this reality very clearly indeed. Allah, the Glorious informs us:

(a) This worldly life is play and pastime. Allah (﷾) says:

> **"And the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement. But far better is the house of the Hereafter for those who are the Muttaqoon (those who are conscious of Allah). Will you then not understand?" [Al-An'aam 6:32].**

(b) The life of this world is a matter of deception. Allah (﷾) says:

> **"Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is**

only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing)." [Aali 'Imraan 3:185]

From the sayings of the Messenger (ﷺ) we can also get a clear picture of the life of this compared to the Next.

> Jaabir Ibn 'Abdullah reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) walked through the market place. Some people were gathered on either side of him. Then he came across a dead goat with very short ears, of which he took hold saying, "Who among you would like to have this for a dirham?"
>
> They said: "We would not even like to have it for nothing, for it is of no use to us."
>
> He (ﷺ) said: "Would you like to have it for free?"
>
> They said: "By Allah, not even if it were alive, because its ears are so short; and now it is also dead."
>
> Thereupon the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "By Allah, this world is more insignificant in the sight of Allah than this is in your eyes." [Muslim]

If anyone becomes convinced of the above, and there is no reason why he should not be, since this is the testimony of both Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). It would then be very easy for him to make the pursuit of the life of the Hereafter his major goal. Every other goal would therefore become insignificant and as such subservient to this major one.

This is because the most effective cure for removing thoughts that occupy the heart is to first remove the reason that is the cause of these different thoughts. This is because the heart would hover around those things that its owner is attached to

and it would then begin to love them. Therefore, whoever has developed a stronger love for anyone or anything other than Allah and the Hereafter would never be free from distracting thoughts during the performance of the Salaah.

Hence, for anyone to properly benefit from his prayer he must make Allah (ﷻ) his first love and the most important thing to himself.

Allah, Himself emphasizes this in the following ayah:

> **"Say (O Muhammad): If your father, and your sons, and your brothers, and your spouses, and your tribe, and the wealth you have acquired, and the merchandise for which there will be no sale, and the dwellings you desire are more loved to you than Allah and His Messenger and Jihaad in His way, then wait until Allah brings His command to pass. And Allah does not guide the wrong doing people." [Taubah 9:24]**

2. Understanding what is said during the Salaah.

This is a very important aspect to develop humility and consciousness while performing the Salaah. It is to make sure that one has a working knowledge of every phrase he recites during the Prayer. This means that he should clearly understand the meaning of the words as well as the principles founded in them. After this, it will now become essential for him to try and savor these meanings whilst reciting them in the Salaah. This would assist the concentration greatly, if Allah wills.

3. Feeling Allah's Majesty in the heart during the performance of the Salaah.

Understanding the meaning of what is recited as explained above not only assist in developing the consciousness that is necessary in the Salaah but it also assists in the 'abd (servant) feeling Allah's Majesty in his heart.

Feeling Allah's Majesty in the heart during the Salaah can be further achieved when the servant of Allah (ﷻ) gets two things clearly established in his mind:

That Allah (ﷻ) is the Greatest. He (ﷻ) owns everything and He (ﷻ) has power to do all things and that if Allah (ﷻ) wants to destroy him, he can do nothing about it. If this is clearly realized and believed in, then this should force the heart to honor Allah (ﷻ)

Being sure that left to his own desires without the Mercy and Guidance of his Lord and Creator, he would be no better, in fact he would be worse than the animals.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

> **"They are like cattle; nay, they are even farther astray from the Path (i.e. even worse than cattle)." [Al-Furqaan 25:44]**

These two traits combined should make the heart adopt a state where it feels the Majesty of Allah during the Salaah.

4.Showing reverence to Allah (﷾).

This is really a manifestation of fear for Allah (﷾) by His servant. This results when the servant becomes aware of His (﷾) Greatness and Majesty.

Fear is what restrains the servant from being disobedient and compels him to worship his Lord. When fear is absent the servant becomes negligent and it becomes easy for him to commit sins. However, it must be known that too much fear brings about hopelessness and despair. Therefore, a servant must follow the middle course, which is to fear the punishment of Allah and hope for His Mercy.

Fear of Allah (﷾) sometimes comes about from knowing Him (﷾) and His Attributes as well as the realization that Allah can do whatever He wills and if He (﷾) were to destroy everything it would not decrease His kingdom in anyway.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said that Allah, the Mighty said:

> **"…And were I to give everyone what he requested, that would not decrease what I have anymore than a needle decreases the sea if put into it…" [Muslim]**

At other times fear of Allah can be developed if a person realizes the magnitude of his sins.

Yet at other times it is caused by a combination of both i.e. his fear of Allah (﷾) will depend upon his being aware of his sins coupled with his awareness of Allah's Glory and Majesty.

Fear of Allah (﷾) is directly proportional to one's knowledge of Him. As his knowledge of Allah (﷾) increases so would his fear of Him. Allah (﷾) clearly states this in the Quran:

"Indeed those of His servants who know Allah are (the most) fearful of Allah." [Faatir 35:28]

Developing fear for Allah should assist in a servant to be reverent to his Lord in his prayers as well as all his other actions.

Hoping for Allah's reward and that He (﷾) will forgive the sins one commits.

Allah (﷾) said:

> **"Say: O My servants who have wronged their souls, do not lose hope of the Mercy of Allah, for surely Allah forgives all sins…" [Az-Zumar 39:53]**

Hoping for Allah's forgiveness and that He (﷾) will reward for good deeds is something that has to be worked for. This does not come about by sitting back and depending on Allah's Mercy as is the state of many Muslims who commit sins. This can only be achieved if the following three conditions are met:

1) Considering what one hopes for as something important. This makes what he is striving after dear to him.

2) Being very afraid of losing whatever he hopes for.

3) Striving to achieve what he hopes for.

If any of the above conditions are missing, then that is not hope but only wishful thinking. This is because the one who has hope is one who is fearful when he strives after something he hopes for, he hastens along because of fear that he might lose it. Allah (﷾) said:

"Surely those who believe and those who make hijrah and struggle in the way of Allah; these are those who have hope in Allah's Mercy…" [Al-Baqarah 2:218]

The Messenger (ﷺ) also emphasizes the need for struggling after what one hopes, he (ﷺ) said:

"Whoever is afraid of being destroyed by the enemy sets out in the early part of the night, and whoever sets forth early achieves his goal. Be aware! Indeed the treasures of Allah are very precious. Take note! The treasure of Allah (ﷻ) is Paradise. [At-Tirmidhi and Al-Haakim].

Hope and fear are characteristics that always go together because both result from the fact that the servant has come to realize his true nature. He knows that he is incapable and in total need of Allah and that he cannot survive in this world or the next except if Allah (ﷻ) is totally merciful to him for all his many shortcomings. Yahya ibn Mu'adh said: **"Any wrong action committed by a believer is followed by two consequences; fear of His (Allah's) punishment and hope for His forgiveness."**

Therefore, true hope is what guides and encourages a person to obedience of Allah (ﷻ) and restricts him from falling into disobedience. On the other hand the one whose hopes lead him to idleness and being involved in evils is a person who is living in deception and who will lose in the end. Developing hope in Allah's Mercy is an attitude that can bring about beautiful results for us in our prayer.

5. Feeling ashamed and insignificant before Allah (سبحانه وتعالى).

This comes about when the worshipper knows that he is weak and commits sins by day and night, and he realizes that Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is aware of this.

This state of mind can be achieved if the following things are realized and worked upon:

1) Understanding that we are weak and have many limitations existing within us and that we sin by night and day. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

> **"Every son of Adam is constantly sinning, and the best of them is the one who turns to Allah in repentance." [Ibn Majah, At-Tirmidhi and Ahmad].**

What helps to emphasize our insignificance is that we are in total need of Allah while He is totally independent of everything. This is beautifully described for us by Allah in a Qudsi Hadeeth. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said that Allah, the Mighty said:

> **"…O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you were to rise up in one place and make a request from Me, and were I to give everyone what he requested, that would not decrease what I have any more than a needle decreases the sea if put into it…" [Part of a Hadeeth found in Sahih Muslim].**

Realizing that we are very much deficient in our sincerity to Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) whenever we worship Him.

Understanding that if we were to worship Allah (ﷻ) as we should, we would never be able to do so effectively. 'Ibn Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) said: **"Two raka`aat prayed consciously is more beneficial than praying the entire night and the heart is inattentive."**

Realizing all the above should make us become very ashamed before Allah and should assist us to humble ourselves.

6. Other Profitable Prescriptions for Humbling the Heart

As discussed before, a true believer must try his best to love Allah (ﷻ) above everyone and everything else. He must also work tenaciously to declare His Glory, fear Him, hope for His mercy and try to be completely ashamed of himself before Allah. He realizes all of this because he knows in reality that he is weak and has numerous limitations and is constantly in error.

These realizations will help a person to become humble before Allah (ﷻ) and there is nothing better that he can achieve.

However, his being unmindful of the above attitudes would only result in his mind heedless and complacent. While praying, these characteristics would be transferred to his prayer also and as such he will find himself suffering from random thoughts, heedlessness and lack of concentration in the Prayer.

The cure for these sicknesses can be achieved if one removes these random thoughts which would provide a temporary relief. However, if one works diligently to dig the roots of these sicknesses that are imbedded in the heart cure would be complete. These roots have to be taken care of from two levels; externally as well as internally.

1.External

The heart is mostly affected by what is observed by the eyes and the ears. These effects leave marks on it, which would finally determine upon what it would focus. The things that would be thought about are what the heart focuses upon and these would produce other thoughts. Therefore, the roots of the thoughts are really the eyes and the ears. So to make the mind be focused on what would be beneficial in the Salaah one must practice lowering the gaze as well as controlling what one listens to.

Allah (ﷻ) said about lowering the gaze:

> **"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty; this is more purifying for them…" [An-Noor 24:30]**

He should also remove any other thing from around him that would assist in distracting him.

As such he should try to pray close to the wall so that the space in front of him is no more than the length of the Sajdah (Prostration). He should try not to pray on the streets nor in rooms that are decorated or that have other distractions such as music, children etc. This is why it is strongly discouraged to decorate the Masjids.

Controlling these external influences is not so difficult. A small amount of effort on this will, by Allah's Mercy, assist us to do better with our concentration in our Salaah.

2. Internal

This is always more difficult to control and master than the external distractions. This is primarily because the thoughts that are in the mind are not confined to only one subject. Thus the mind roams from one thing to the other. If one tries to shut off one thought that distracts him, if the same thought does not return another takes place.

Added to this is the fact that his most dangerous enemy (Satan) is very covetous of anyone who prostrates because he was cast out of Paradise because he refused to. Thus he diligently works on distracting anyone who prays. He will therefore, use every possible strategy to assist the heart to roam wildly. Is it not in the Salaah that you find yourself suddenly remembering things that you might have misplaced, etc?

The cure for this is to concentrate on the meanings of what is being recited and to make these meanings the thoughts with which the heart becomes occupied. What will help along with this is to prepare the mind before starting the prayer by concentrating upon Whom we are going to be standing before and try to feel as if we are standing on Judgment Day to be judged by our Lord. We should also try to convince ourselves that this might be our final farewell prayer as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

> "Pray a farewell prayer as if you see Him…" [Tabaraani, Ibn Majah, Ahmad]

Our aim behind establishing prayer should be what Allah (﷾) made as the aim. He (﷾) says:

"Establish Prayer for My remembrance." [Taha 20:14]

What is evident from this command is that we must establish Salaah for Allah's remembrance and not be absent-minded and heedless during our performance of it. This is further emphasized when Allah (ﷻ) reprimands us for heedlessness. He (ﷻ) said:

"And do not be among the heedless…" [Al-A'raaf 7:205]

Conclusion

Now after reading this humble work let us examine ourselves: Are we praying as we should? Are we establishing Salaah for Allah's remembrance or is it mostly habit? Or are we just praying and not even understanding why we are praying?

It is too dangerous for us to continue like this especially when we know that Salaah is the first action that a believer would be questioned about on the Day of Judgment and if it is correct then he would have prospered and succeeded. Do we not wish for prosperity and success?

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

> **"The first action for which a servant of Allah will be held accountable on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayers. If they are in order then he would have prospered and succeeded…" [At-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, An-Nasaa'ee, Ahmad and Ibn Majah]**

My brothers and sisters is it not that we should try to be fair to ourselves and try our best to pray to Allah alone? Should we not try to show gratitude to our Creator Who has bestowed all the various bounties upon us? At least we should try to obey His (سبحانه وتعالى) simple command:

"Establish prayer for My remembrance" [Taha 20:14]